23. Special Officer in charge of Irrigation.

Mr. C. V. Kuriyan.—I beg to move that "This Council requests the Government to appoint a Special Officer to be in charge of irrigation". This is not the first time that the same matter has come up for discussion in this Council. I believe that a very same resolution has been once passed by the Council unanimously and at the time when that resolution or motion was brought to the notice of the Government, I think there was an officer in charge of the department and that officer was conducting surveys of the schemes which were for the consideration of the Government. Now, after that there was a readjustment of the department. The Engineering Department was divided into 3 blocks each of which division was in charge of separate officers. By that arrangement the Special Officer's post was abolished and at present there is no one to take up that place. Now the question of irrigation is an important one and the Government have been considering the Thanikudam scheme, and the lift irrigation scheme of Vellarappilli, and over and above those two schemes there is at present the Chalakkudi diversion scheme which has to be investigated and there will be the question of lift irrigation coming up when the Hydro-Electric project is going to be a success. A survey of the irrigation possibilities in the State was conducted at the time of Mr. Bhore. I think it was by Mr. Ninan, the Assistant Engineer, that the investigation was conducted and during the course of the investigations he submitted reports in connection with certain major irrigation schemes. It is in this connection that the Karuvannur diversion scheme, which has been agitating the minds of the people for so long a time, was submitted to the Government. Now, after that survey was conducted, no definite step has as yet been taken in respect of any scheme proposed at the time of Mr. Bhore, except the Vellarappilli lift irrigation scheme. As for the Thanikudam scheme, the preliminary report was submitted by the department to the Government and the Government said in the Council—in the first Council—that expert investigation will be required, and the investigation completed was only preliminary and after the final report the Government will undertake that scheme. Now even that also is not complete. Even though the Thanikudam scheme is a fair, reasonable and a very feasible one, I fail to see why the hesitation of the Department in undertaking that scheme. Either it must be that the Thanikudam scheme is not so promising as it appears to be, or is it because they have to spend something like 10 or 15 lakhs of rupees or is it that it may not be a success, that they feel some diffidence in undertaking that scheme? Over and

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above these two schemes, I think, there is another scheme proposed by the Agricultural Department in respect of the Manali diversion. Now, that scheme has not been investigated even though that was suggested to the Engineering Department. It has not done anything in the matter. I refer to the Muppuzha river diversion scheme on the high regions of the Manali. Then again, the Member for Urakam, I suppose, wanted the Marathakara diversion scheme. There is the Chittur diversion scheme. Even though a preliminary investigation has been conducted, Government have not done anything in respect of that scheme. If the Thanikudam scheme is to be kept in abeyance until the diversion of the Chalakkudi is completed, there will be the possibility for the department to undertake the storage of water for Kole lands or any other scheme to irrigate the Kole lands and the *Viruppu* and the *Mundakan* lands as well. In the light of these schemes which do not appear to be practical on financial standpoints, it will be to the interests of the ryots that a department in charge of a Special Officer be immediately created. The Engineering Departmeat at present is pressed with several matters that it scarcely finds time to devote properly for the irrigation questions. Last time when the Irrigation Bill Committee was sitting at Chittur where the irrigation system has been scientifically adopted, even there we were surprised to hear a lot of complaints from the people as to the distribution of water. If the ryots were to petition the Land Revenue Department then they will say, "that it is not within our rights. It is the duty of the Engineering Department to regulate the distribution of the water". When they approach the Engineering Department they say that it is the Land Revenue Department that has undertaken the distribution of water. So these disputes between the two Departments have entailed considerable difficulties to the ryots in getting a proper distribution of water, At preseut the distribution is not exclusively under the power of the Engineering Department. I think the Revenue Department also has some hand in the distribution of water. Now, these differences between the Departments also cause great inconvenience and difficulties to the ryots. In the light of these observations, I think it would be better that a Special Officer in charge of irrigation matters be appointed and I would rather prefer an expert officer brought down from anywhere even outside the State, so that the Department may work properly. Now the Irrigation Department is one of the most important Departments in the State to which the Government should give all energy and encouragement. No Member from this side will grudge the spending of any amount towards irrigation so that agriculture may properly be improved.

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Now, that was the same attitude taken by the Government also. They also do not grudge spending money on this. But no scheme has been taken on hand and no spade work has been done in respect of any scheme. We are in the same condition as we were 15 or 20 years ago. Excepting the Vellarappilly lift irrigation scheme, I think there is no scheme for which any action has been taken. I will submit also that even though budget allotments have been granted for irrigation, no money has yet been spent towards it. The Karuvannur diversion scheme is one for which provisions were made two times, one for a lakh of rupees and another for a lakh and 50 thousand. Now, where are these grants allotted by the Council? Those have lapsed. In respect of the Tanikudam scheme, even for preliminary investigation 15 thousand rupees was sauctioned and then again in 1104 and 1105 to complete that investigation another amount was sanctioned. Now we only see here empty promises made to this Council that 'we will devote our entire energy towards it. In one of the discussions, when the budget for 1104 was presented in this Council, the Finance Member said that 'the cry is everywhere for irrigation and we have devoted money for irrigation'. Well, what have they done? It is not enough to say that we have to do so much of spade work. In the circumstances, I submit, that we will not be satisfied with empty promises. We want active work and spare no time towards irrigation. If the Department does not find it possible for undertaking irrigation works, the best method will be to sppoint an officer from the State to devote more attention and more energy towards this important question of irrigation. I request that the Government will be pleased to appoint a Special Officer who is an expert in the line of irrigation.

Mr. V. V. Anantapadmanabha Ayyar.—Sir, I second the resolution. I did not intend speaking on this occasion. Though I had the occasion to introduce the Cochin Irrigation Bill subsequently, however, I have to leave it unfinished, leaving it a legacy to some one else to take it up and work on it during the next Council. So I think it will only be proper if I say a few words on this occasion. At the time when the Cochin Irrigation Bill was introduced, according to a provision in the Council rules that the Member in charge of the Department must also be included as a Member in the Select Committee, I was in a very difficult situation to find out who the Member in charge of Irrigation was. Therefore, the difficulty had to be solved by including a large number of Members from the Government benches, for example, the Diwan Peishkar, the Chief Engineer and the Superintendent of Agriculture and Panchayats. All

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these 3 individuals had to be included as Members of the Committee. Now, because of the fact that no one particular individual is in charge of irrigation, no one particular individual seem to be responsible for the progress of irrigation works. Cochin being essentially an agricultural country, irrigation is one of the greatest needs that the Government has to pay special attention to. That being so, it would be quite essential that some particular individual should be responsible for it—should be responsible for the progress of irrigation works. As it is, we find that no particular individual is responsible for it and we have not got any expert in that direction. There is no continuity of policy in this matter. Therefore, by taking all into account my submission is that we are in a very bad predicament on account of the fact that there is no Special Officer in this House. With these few words I would second the resolution.

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—Sir, as the mover of the resolution has stated, this is not the first time the resolution, almost of the same wording, is introduced before this Council. The Government have been seriously considering this question on those occasions. The same was referred to the Economic Development Committee for their opinion. They considered over this matter and said that the State is not large enough to afford for a separate Irrigation Department under a separate Head of a Department in Cochin. There has been no similar appointments either in Travancore or in Mysore. But there has been one in the Madras Presidency. But there has no comparison between Cochin and the Madras Presidency. Cochin State cannot afford for a separate Department like the one in the Madras Presidency for irrigation purposes alone. Then the Economic Development Board also suggested that it will be very advisable to have a special division called 'Irrigation Division' under the Public Works Department and it said that a special Assistant Engineer may be appointed to investigate the schemes for irrigation. That was being followed in the State for nearly two years and as a result you have now certain schemes which are under execution. I refer mainly to the Karuvannur diversion scheme, which has been agitating the minds of the people for so long as 16 or 18 years for which no solution has been made. It was mainly due to the efforts of the separate Irrigation Department that the scheme for preventing the floods in the Karuvannur area was brought about. And that scheme is now under execution. Similarly, the improvement of the Mulathara canal in the Chittur irrigation system has also been investigated and it is showing the desired results. Another scheme which I may mention is the Vellarappilly lift irrigation scheme and the Mem-

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ber for Vellarappilly would remember the progress we have made in the case of the Manapat Chira works; and we have also investigated and the final estimates of the Thanikudam scheme unfortunately is being held in abeyance, because of the question of the Chalakkudi diversion scheme. Certainly these irrigation works cannot be done as speedily as the construction of a building or so. Their interests are so interlinked that one has serious effects on the other. Naturally, there will be some delay in the matter of excution of big irrigation schemes. If you read the history of big irrigation schemes in the Godaveri, Mettur or any other place which you might probably remember, you will find for how many years the matter was under correspondence. In some cases it has come to more than 16 years or so. The Government can accept this resolution on this condition: If the Member wants a separate division of irrigation in the State the Government are glad to accept the recommendation, but not as a separate Head of a Department.

Mr. C. V. Kuriyan.—I only want a separate division under a Special Officer, not independent of the Public Works Department. A separate division under an Assistant Engineer in charge of irrigation would suffice. My object is that these works referred to by the Chief Engineer, such as the Moolathara system, was suggested during the time of Mr. Bhore But all these works were kept in abeyance from 1094. My object is simply to minimise the delay and to devote more attention towards irrigation. For that a separate division is necessary. I beg leave of the House to withdraw the resolution.

The resolution was with leave withdrawn.

24. Extension of Tramway Line to Vypeen.

Mr. C. J. Mathew.—Sir this resolution is with regard to the proposed opening of a tramway line in Cranganur; but from a reply given by the Government this morning it seems the Madras Government have not yet decided about the scheme. Therefore, before I move the resolution, I request the Chief Engineer to explain at what stage the consideration of the proposed tramway line stands with the Government of Madras. I thought that no criticisms would be invited unless the Madras Government had already decided about it.

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon.—The tramway line is being undertaken by Mr. Perie who proposed to us the opening of a line through Cranganur. He has approached the Madras Government and they have asked us whether we have any objection for taking the line through Cranganur.

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—Mr. Perie has applied to the Madras Government for sanction to construct the line along

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